Water Supply
Malicious March, Delicious April!
Upcoming Conferences

The April 1 Water Supply Index and Bulletin 120 Runoff Forecasts are complete. The forecast includes the observed conditions through the end of March:

http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir/WSI
http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120
http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/bulletin120/b120apr08.pdf

For the Sierra basins, the projected median APRIL-JULY runoff forecasts range from 91% (Kaweah River) to 68% (Cosumnes River). The statewide forecast is down, on average, about six percent since the March 25 forecast update. The statewide April through July snowmelt runoff forecast is about 80% of average.

The MEDIAN WATER YEAR Sacramento 4 River (Sacramento R at Bend, Feather R at Oroville, Yuba R at Smartville, and American R at Folsom) runoff forecast is now 11.9 Million Acre Feet (MAF); 64% of the 1956-2005 average. The median Water Year San Joaquin 4 River (Stanislaus R below Goodwin, Tuolumne R below La Grange, Merced R below Merced Falls, and San Joaquin R inflow to Millerton) runoff forecast is 4.2 MAF; 71% of the 1956-2005 average. The statewide Water Year runoff forecast is about 65%.

WATER YEAR TYPE Forecast: The Sacramento Valley Water Year Type Index forecast is "Dry". The San Joaquin Valley Water Year Type Index forecast is "Dry". The final designation will be made in May. Last year those indices were "Dry", and "Critical", respectively. While the last newsletter indicated the forecast for the San Joaquin was for "Below Normal", March figures had yet to be tallied. It was a very poor month for rain and snow. You've heard of a Miracle March? This was a Malicious March. March, 2008 has been re-ranked as the sixth driest March of 89 years of record for the 8 Station Index, with a precipitation total of 1.6" (23% of average). The MARCH Sacramento River Region unimpaired runoff was 50% of average. The March, 2008 San Joaquin River Region was 60% of average.

In addition to being dry, March temperatures remained cold enough early in the month to retain the majority of the snowpack. Those factors, and dry antecedent conditions resulted in OCTOBER thru MARCH cumulative runoff of only 55% of average, statewide. (The Sacramento River Region observed unimpaired runoff was 52% of average through March, 2008. On March 31, 2007, it was about 58% of average).

"Unimpaired Runoff" or "Full Natural Flow" represents the natural water production of a river basin, unaltered by upstream diversions, storage, or by export or import of water to or from other watersheds. Gauged flows at the given measurement points are increased or decreased to account for these upstream operations.

NOAA's California Water Supply Outlook is also available:
http://www.cnrfc.noaa.gov/products/water_supply/2008/ws042008.pdf

As of April 1, reservoir storage was 85% of average for the date, still well below average. Since we are passing the time of year for highest flood control concerns, reservoirs will be able to retain a great deal of the incoming snowmelt. However, the ground is very dry. Perhaps less of the snowmelt will make it off the mountainside than in other years.

Snowpack water content (as of April 8) from automated sensors is at 91% of average statewide. The snow water content sensors are indicating the pack is consolidating and melting. Warm weather will enhance snow melt and start to increase the flow of creeks and streams.

Forecasts are for a dominant High pressure system over the western US and eastern Pacific throughout the weekend. Both daytime highs and overnight lows will be above normal statewide. One computer model holds on to a developing storm pattern early next week, but this is the same model that's been saying "look out, storm in 5-7 days" for about 5 weeks in a row, now. Hard to decide which to believe, but others are coming into consensus about some sort of trof or cutoff low developing over the Eastern Pacific. Either way, enjoy several days of very warm, sunny conditions until then. The period Friday through Monday could see readings in the 80's for many valley, coastal and even foothill locations! (For weather buffs, the high will be of the 582-584 decameter variety.)

Upcoming presentations or conferences of note:

April 10, Delta Emergency Response Planning Workshop, 4-6pm, Courtland, CA.
A collaborative effort is underway by the Department of Water Resources, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Delta Protection Commission, the five Delta county emergency services offices, and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive Delta emergency response and operation plan.

State Climatologist Dr. Michael Anderson heads to downtown Los Angeles this Friday, April 11 for the Alluvial Fan Task Force to talk about climate change and alluvial fans. Next week is a trip to Hood River, Oregon to discuss snow with snow experts from the western U.S. In May, the climate tour heads for Honolulu, HI for the American Society of Civil Engineers Water and Environment Congress 2008 to talk about describing/modeling climate with dynamic (time varying) probability distributions.

April 16, Elissa Lynn, American Meteorological Society speaker, UC Davis, 6pm. "Media-Rology"

May 6-9 ACWA Association of California Water Agencies Spring Conference, Portola & Marriott Hotels, Monterey, CA. Elissa Lynn, "Climate Change"
breakfast opening keynote, May 7. Additional info:
http://acwa.com//events/SC08/INDEX.asp

June 20, 2008 California Extreme Precipitation Symposium
Theme: "Estimating and Forecasting Extreme Floods"
University of California, Davis
8:00 to 4:30

$50 (early registration)
Online registration is open and to get more information:
www.arwi.us/precip

Be back in May with another newsletter. Have a nice spring!

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Weather_and_Climate_News

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